

FILE DDS+T

DATE: 18 October

TO: Mr. R. J. Smith

FROM: Karl

SUBJECT: DDS&T Assessment of Forecasting Capability of NIEs

REMARKS:

You are invited to comment on the attached text by [redacted] before it is sent to the DCI.

The DCI has asked Wheelon to assess the accuracy of the strategic estimates. The general conclusion of the survey is that the forecasts in the NIEs have been "amazingly accurate."

Wheelon has also invited comment from ONE, OCI and ORR et al. by 22 October. I don't believe that it is necessary for you to comment substantively unless you have a particular wish to do so.

[redacted] comments are attached for your info. Oldham's study deals only with the numerical aspect of ~~the~~ the estimative record. As you well know, there is more to it than that. I should think that this would be mainly a matter between ONE and Wheelon.

ACTION

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20 October 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT : Comments on Forecasting Capability as Reflected in NIE's

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1. [] evaluation deals with forecast accuracy on numbers of strategic strike weapons. Other estimative aspects such as identification of new types of offensive and defensive systems to be deployed and the qualitative nature of Soviet weapons systems are not evaluated.

2. Concerning the numerical evaluation given, the composite unit deviations are reassuringly small. In the examples given, however, it should be recognized that for 1963-65 we were low in our estimates of bombers and high in our estimates of ICBMs, a fortuitous counterbalancing effect.

3. The comments in para. 5 omit one of the reasons for gross overestimates of ICBM capabilities. The Soviets twice have apparently planned more ICBM deployment than they carried out--the two instances being their first and second generation ICBM systems. The estimative deviation in each instance would have been significantly less if the Soviets had carried out plans in existence at the time the estimates were made.

[]
Chief, Military Division

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15 OCT 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of National Estimates
Acting Deputy Director for Intelligence
Director of Current Intelligence
Director of Research and Reports
Director of Scientific Intelligence
Director, Foreign Missile and Space
Analysis Center

SUBJECT: Forecasting Capability as Reflected
in NIE's

1. One of the action items flowing from the recent Hyland Panel meeting had its origin in their question as to how accurate our strategic estimates have been in the past and what sort of closed loop, ex post facto evaluation did we make of the estimating accuracy. The Director assigned this study to me, and I asked [] to take an analytical look at the problem, since he has personally not been involved in the estimating business.

2. The attached study by [] represents his clinical analysis of our past performance, which I find quite gratifying. However, before forwarding this to the Director, I should like to have your comments, criticisms or enlargements. May I have these by Friday, 22 October?

ALBERT D. WHEELON
Deputy Director
for
Science and Technology

Enclosure: []

cc: DD/I
[]

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